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U.S. Department

*Building*

# A BETTER DIET

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**VEGETABLE**  
**FRUIT**  
*Group*



**BREAD**  
**CEREAL**  
*Group*



**MILK**  
**CHEESE**  
*Group*



**MEAT** and **Poultry**  
**Fish** and **BEANS**  
*Group*



**FATS**  
**SWEETS**  
*Group*



# EAT BETTER

## YOU OWE IT TO YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY

*This pamphlet tells you how to use your food stamps to buy and eat good, healthy foods.*

*That's important. Many scientists say that what people eat — and don't eat — affects their health in a number of ways.*

*Eating better may not make you feel any different all at once, but it may make it less likely that you will be hit by some diet-related diseases which can strike people when they are older.*

*The facts in this booklet can make it easier for you to eat healthy foods on your food stamp budget. It's never too early, or too late, to begin.*

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**E**verything we eat belongs to five food "families" or groups. Nutrients in these foods fit together like pieces of a puzzle to help our bodies grow and stay sound and healthy.

Knowing which foods contain which nutrients is the first step toward eating a balanced diet. The following pages will help you do that.

Eating foods with more calories, or food energy, than we can use means a weight gain. So it is a good, general rule to choose most foods

from the groups which supply nutrients as well as calories.

The four food groups which do that are:

**FRUITS AND VEGETABLES**

**BREADS AND CEREALS**

**MILK AND CHEESES**

**MEAT, POULTRY, FISH, AND  
BEANS**

The fifth group,  
**FATS AND SWEETS,**  
provides lots of calories but few nutrients.

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## FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

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Fruits and vegetables are good sources of vitamin A, vitamin C, and fiber.

**VITAMIN A** helps keep the skin healthy. It protects against night blindness and helps you see well. Vitamin A also helps the body grow.

**VITAMIN C** builds the material which connects the body's cells. The body needs it for healthy gums and to resist infection.

**FIBER** some experts say may help prevent constipation and some diseases of the large intestine. It may also help control your weight.

Different fruits and vegetables will give different amounts of these and other nutrients, so it is a good idea to vary the ones you eat.

Dark green and deep yellow vegetables like squash, carrots, broccoli, and greens give vitamin A. Most dark green vegetables also supply vitamin C, but only if they are not overcooked. Citrus fruits like oranges and grapefruit give lots of vitamin C.

Some greens — collards, kale, mustard, turnip, and dandelion — give calcium and iron, as well as vitamins.

Nearly all fruits and vegetables are low in fat, and none has cholesterol unless animal fat is added in cooking.



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*NOTE: Locally grown fruits and vegetables, when they are in season and there are*

*lots of them, can be a dollar-stretching bargain. Watch for them where you shop.*



# BREAD CEREAL Group







## BREAD CEREAL Group

## BREADS AND CEREALS

Enriched breads and cereals, especially whole-grain products, are important sources of the B vitamins, iron, and fiber. They also supply some protein—a good thing to remember if you are cutting down on meat or do not eat it.

**THE B VITAMINS** help our bodies grow at a normal rate.

Most breakfast cereals have nutrients added at levels higher than those which are there naturally. Some vitamins like vitamins A, B<sub>12</sub>, C, and D are added which are not naturally found in cereals. You can find out which nutrients are in which cereals by reading the nutrition label on the box.

Foods included in the group are whole grain and enriched breads, biscuits, muffins, waffles, pancakes, cooked and ready-to-eat cereals, cornmeal, flour, grits, macaroni and spaghetti, noodles, rice, rolled oats, barley, bulgar, and corn and flour tortillas.

## **MILK AND CHEESES**

Milk and milk products supply most of the calcium in the average American diet. Milk and its products also give vitamin A and protein. Most milk you buy has vitamin D added to it.

**CALCIUM** is the mineral

which builds strong teeth and bones.

**VITAMIN D** helps your body absorb the calcium you need.

Low fat or skim milk products are better choices than whole milk products. With vitamins A and D added they have the same nutrients as whole milk products, but





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Low fat or skim milk products are better choices than whole milk products. With vitamins A and D added they have the same nutrients as whole milk products, but

fewer calories and less fat.

You can buy milk in many forms: whole, skim, low-fat, evaporated, buttermilk, and nonfat dry milk. Milk products also include yogurt, ice cream, ice milk, and cheeses, including cottage cheese.

If you or members of your

family prefer the taste of whole milk but not the calories it gives, try mixing it half and half, with skim milk or nonfat dry milk and water, made according to the package directions.

**MILK**  
**CHEESE**  
Group





## **MEAT, POULTRY, FISH, AND BEANS**

These foods are important sources of protein, iron, and other minerals and vitamins.

**PROTEIN** is vital to all living cells and helps build and repair all body tissues like skin, bone, hair, blood, and muscle.

**IRON** helps build healthy blood.

Because each food offers different combinations of nutrients, along with protein, try to eat a variety of the foods in this group. Lean, red meats not only give protein, they supply iron and several of the B vitamins. Liver and egg yolks are valuable sources of vitamin A. Dry peas and beans, soybeans, and nuts supply magnesium, which helps your body change food





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into energy. Fish and poultry are excellent choices because they are relatively low in calories and fat, and high in vitamins and minerals.

Foods in this group include beef, veal, lamb, pork, poultry, fish, shellfish, organ meats (such as liver and kidneys), dry beans and peas, soybeans, lentils, eggs, seeds, nuts, peanuts, and peanut butter.

All meat contains cholesterol (see Fat Facts). Fish and shellfish, except shrimp, are relatively low in cholesterol. Egg yolks and organ meats have the most cholesterol.

# FATS SWEETS

Group

CAUTION



## **FATS AND SWEETS**

Most of the foods in this group are high in calories and low in nutrients. They should be eaten very moderately and only once in a while if you are trying to lose weight.

Fats and oils, for example, have more than twice the calories, ounce for ounce, as protein, starches, or sugars.

**CALORIES** are food energy and our bodies need them. The number of calories we need depends on many factors such as how much energy we use, our growth, and body size. However, eating more than the body needs will cause you to gain weight.

- Older people need fewer calories than young people.
- Active people need more calories than people who are less active.

- Boys and men usually need more calories than girls and women.
- Teenagers need more calories than young children.

Foods in this group include butter, margarine, lard, drippings, mayonnaise and other salad dressings, other fats and oils, candy, sugar, jams, jellies, many gravies, syrups, sweet toppings, and soft drinks. Also included are bakery products that are not enriched with vitamins and added nutrients.

If you are gaining unwanted weight, the foods in this group are the ones to cut down or cut out. If you still gain weight, eat smaller amounts of foods from the other four groups, but do eat foods from all four. They provide the nutrients our bodies need.



# SALT FACTS



## SALTY FACTS

Some experts say that most people should eat less salt because it can lead to high blood pressure and stroke for some people.

If you want to cut down on salt, remember:

- Many canned and processed foods come with salt already added. Check the label.
- Measure the salt you add in cooking instead of throwing in an extra dash. You may find that a smaller amount will do just fine.
- Try seasoning with pepper, lemon juice, or a sprinkling of paprika.
- Keep the salt shaker with the sugar bowl—someplace other than on the table where you eat.



# FAT FACTS

People who eat a lot of animal fat may develop higher levels of a fat-like substance in the blood called cholesterol. Some

scientists believe high cholesterol levels are associated with heart disease. Too much cholesterol in the blood can cause fat to build up and block the blood's passage through arteries.

The fats you eat come from two sources — animals and vegetables. Fats are naturally present in such foods from animals as whole milk, cheese, and meat. Fats from vegetables are in nuts and chocolate. Fats are naturally present in some foods. In others, we add fats and oil in cooking, such as fried foods, pastries, some gravies, and salad dressings.

If you think your diet may include too much fat and you want to cut down, here are some suggestions:

- Include more fruits and vegetables, whole-grain breads, cereals, and dry beans and peas in your meals.
- Eat lean meats rather than fatty ones. Don't eat the skins of poultry like turkey and chicken. Do include more fish and the meat of chicken and turkey and other poultry in your meals. They are generally lower in fat.
- Watch the amount of nuts, peanuts, and peanut butter. They have a lot of protein, but they also have a lot of fat.
- Use skim or low-fat milk and their products instead of whole milk and its products. Ice milk, for example, has less fat than ice cream. Uncreamed cottage cheese has less fat than the creamed kind.

You don't have to do *all* these things. For instance, if you cut down on your meat fat, you don't have to worry as much about the fat in milk.

The idea is to avoid extremes.





# SWEET FACTS I

Sugar and most sweets don't offer you much more than calories. When you eat a lot of them, they are likely to take the place of foods which offer more in vitamins, minerals, and protein.

Experts agree that eating too much sugar speeds tooth decay and may add unwanted pounds.

It's hard to be sure how much sugar you actually eat, because some foods come with sugar already added.

Here are some points to keep in mind:

- Check the labels. Remember that ingredients are listed by the amount the product contains. If sugar is listed first, the product contains more sugar than anything else. If it is second or third, it contains more sugar than all but one or two other ingredients. And so on down the list.
- Maybe the label won't say "sugar." Watch for such words

as sucrose, glucose, dextrose, fructose, corn syrups, corn sweeteners, natural sweeteners, and invert sugars. They are *all* forms of sugar.

- Many dentists say that for better and healthier teeth, you should eat less sugar and sweet foods. Instead of sweets between meals, eat fresh fruits and vegetables.

- Brush or rinse your mouth after meals or snacks, especially when you have had sweet foods.

- Drink more water and fruit juice and less soft drinks, fruit drinks, soda pop, and punches, most of which have lots of sugar.

- Go easy on candy, pies, cakes, pastries, and cookies.

- Buy fruit canned in its own juice or in light syrup.

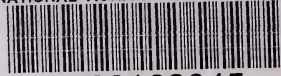
- Many cereals come with sugar already added. If you buy cereal without sugar, you can add the amount of sugar you want. But if it's already there, you can't scrape it off.

- Try putting less sugar in your favorite recipes. Do it a little at a time so you can decide what amount is right for you.

- Keep temptation out of easy reach. Don't keep the sugar bowl on the table where you eat.

# Snack FACTS

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Is it true what they say about snacking? That it's bad for you and you shouldn't do it? Ever?

Well, yes. And then again, no.

The answer depends on how much you eat at meals and what foods you choose for snacks. Snacks can be a great idea if they give your body the nutritious foods that your regular meals are lacking.

Some people can't or don't want to eat a lot at one sitting. They may get hungry before it's time for the next meal.

There's nothing wrong with feeding your body the nutritious foods it needs at times other than meal time. But you shouldn't overload on calories or gobble up snacks that are loaded with sugar, salt, and fat.

Many people would rather substitute a later snack for a dessert at meals. Fine — if your calorie count will permit it.

Nutritious snack foods include fruits and fruit juices, custards or puddings, yogurt, homemade popcorn (easy on the oil), raw vegetables like carrots and celery sticks, graham crackers, and bread sticks.

The Food Stamp Program is available to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, age, political beliefs, or handicap.



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